

## THE OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

### Center for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities

### New Explorations: Faculty Learning Communities

#### SPRING 2019 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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#### **Program Description**

The ongoing national conversation about convergence has inspired efforts to develop collaborative and interdisciplinary teams that integrate the arts, humanities, social sciences, and sciences, and demonstrate holistic consideration of the societal impacts of science and the arts from inception.

Creating meaningful collaboration across disciplines can be challenging. Many times, interdisciplinary research groups are cobbled together in a rush, after a funding opportunity emerges that demands it. This can make the process of finding partners ad hoc, a result of a quick internet search or recommendation from a colleague down the hall.

To address this challenge, the Center for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities (CEAH), in collaboration with the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR), is initiating a program that seeks to bring together potential collaborators interested in a particular topic through Faculty Learning Communities. These new learning communities are designed to lay the groundwork for long term, collaborative, interdisciplinary research partnerships. The goals of the learning communities are manifold. One goal is to create durable research teams that emerge out of mutual interest that holistically address problems from different disciplinary perspectives. Another is to develop an ecosystem of interlinked interdisciplinary faculty researchers that is both broad and deep. Yet another is to begin breaking down the many silos that exist on campus, to improve information flows, and set the stage for future high impact research projects that cut across disciplinary boundaries. The outcome of the learning communities is to build interdisciplinary teams of researchers from multiple disciplines across the University, who will be positioned to develop long-term collaborations that address major societal issues facing Iowa, the United States, and beyond.

This RFP seeks proposals from either individual faculty or small groups of faculty from any discipline (s), interested in developing and convening a learning community. Proposals for learning communities can be formed around any potential research topic. The primary stipulation is that topics should be framed in ways that emphasize their breadth, interdisciplinarity, and inclusivity, and written so that scholars from the arts, humanities, social sciences, sciences, and technologies may be equally engaged. Examples of topics include, but are by no means limited to, science fiction, artificial intelligence, or food systems.

The point is to begin at the beginning, with few restrictions or prescribed outcomes. The hope is that after initial support from CEAH and OVPR, learning communities will become self-sustaining. Eventually, we hope to see members of these communities develop collaborative publications, symposia, grant applications, courses, and other expressions of scholarly output. The emphasis at this point is helping individuals with overlapping interests find one another and begin the process of building intellectual fellowship.

Small professional development grants (\$500) will be awarded to conveners to support their efforts, and all learning communities will receive support (up to \$500) to cover the cost of refreshments for at least four meetings. Additionally, staff from CEAH and OVPR will provide logistical support for scheduling meetings, arranging meeting spaces, and coordinating refreshments.

#### **Review Criteria for Learning Community Applications**

The goal of these grants is to support innovative projects that have an interdisciplinary focus and involve collaborations between faculty in the diverse range of disciplines that exist on campus. The aim is to build new teams that can generate ideas about addressing big social issues, but that also contribute to the development of the individual faculty participants.

Applications for establishing a learning community will be evaluated based on the intellectual significance of the idea, and how the potential learning community complements, challenges, or expands existing strengths on campus. Proposals should convey clearly to a non-specialist audience the ideas, objectives, methods, and value to scholarship in convening the learning community, as well as explain the interdisciplinary nature of the learning community.

### **Eligibility**

Learning community conveners must be tenured or tenure track faculty at the University. Conveners may be based in any department on campus, but the topic of interest should have wide appeal to researchers from many different disciplines. The precise disciplinary composition of a learning community is less important than clearly demonstrating that the idea at the core of the community bridges the arts, engineering, humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Learning community grants may not be used to complete a specific project previously funded by CEAH or OVPR.

### **Applications**

Applications (completed in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins on all sides) should include the following:

1. **Applicant Information:** The proposal should include a title page that lists the learning community title and the participating faculty, along with their organizational or departmental affiliation and a brief, 300-word summary of the idea.
2. **Timeline for Establishing the Learning Community:** A brief description of the strategy, not exceeding one page, for identifying and reaching out to potential learning community members, anticipated number of participants, a timeline for establishing the learning community, and ideas for how collaboration can be maintained beyond the initial duration of the grant.
3. **Curriculum Vita:** A current curriculum vitae (2 pages maximum) for the convener (s).

### **Award Conditions**

Funds for an award will be available in the current fiscal year (FY19) and following fiscal year (FY20). Professional development funds (\$500) may be used to support the career development of the convener. Up to \$500 is available to support refreshments for learning community meetings (no alcohol allowed). Applicants will be expected to convene at least four meetings of learning community participants by the end of the following academic year (May 15, 2020).

### **Reporting Requirements**

By June 15, 2020, the convener must submit a brief two-page report that outlines the number of learning community meetings held, membership, core concept developed and next steps to maintain the learning community. Reports should be submitted as a single PDF with the names of the convener and the learning community in the title of the document via email to [vprfunding@iastate.edu](mailto:vprfunding@iastate.edu).

### **Application and Evaluation Process**

Please submit your application as a single, complete PDF file at the link below. **The deadline for applications is April 21, 2019.**

### **[SUBMIT HERE](#)**

The OVPR and CEAH will convene, in consultation with the colleges, an Evaluation Committee with broad representation across Colleges to review proposals using the criteria discussed above. The Committee makes funding recommendations to the VPR. Announcement of awards will be made by **May 15, 2019**.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the CEAH Director, Carlton Basmajian ([carlton@iastate.edu](mailto:carlton@iastate.edu)) or Surya Mallapragada ([suryakm@iastate.edu](mailto:suryakm@iastate.edu)), OVPR, for guidance prior to submitting proposals.